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IV-18 (Teacher Training)

SPONSORING COMMITTEE

Professor Alonzo F. Myers, *Chairman;* Professor Clara S. Platt and Associate Professor Milton Schwebel

This abstract approved by chairman

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Education of New York University, 1952

THE VOCATIONAL INTERESTS AND JOB SATISFACTION OF WOMEN ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

BY JOHN C. HUTCHINSON, JR.

7245

It was the purpose of this investigation to compare the vocational interests and the job satisfaction of women elementary teachers of three different training groups:

1. Regulars. The four-year graduates of the New Jersey State Teachers College at Newark in the classes of 1946–1950, with majors in elementary education and possessing standard certificates.
2. Secondary majors. The graduates of other colleges with majors in a secondary field such as English or social studies and education courses on the secondary level, who had elected after graduation to take special emergency courses in elementary education at the Newark State Teachers College between 1946 and 1951. Since the members of this group with few exceptions had qualified for secondary certification in New Jersey, these elementary teachers were actually *retrained* junior- and senior-high-school teachers.
3. Liberal arts. Those college graduates provisionally trained between 1946 and 1951 in summer-session and part-time courses in elementary education, who in that work were getting their first real exposure to professional education.

Although of different backgrounds, the teachers in the second and third groups constituted a supply of emergency trained and provisionally certificated elementary teachers in New Jersey. Teachers of such training backgrounds were employed in New Jersey school districts between 1946 and 1951 in the face of an inadequate supply of the regularly trained, standard certificated elementary teachers. Their employment in rather large numbers represented something of a departure in public-school policy.

The regular and emergency teachers who participated in the study were a relatively inexperienced group, their minimum experience being one year and the maximum five years. Each one was identified in terms of grade level (kindergarten—three and grades four to six), class size (small being 29 or fewer and large being 30 or more), and the size of the school district in which employed (small town under 25,000 population, medium city between 25,000 and 100,000, and big city over 100,000). Each of the participating teachers contributed a completed Strong Vocational Interest Blank and a Teaching Satisfaction Scale. The latter was adapted from the scales used

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by Hoppock and Schwebel, and tested for validity and reliability in a preliminary operation in five New Jersey elementary schools with ninety teachers.

While the investigation was admittedly an outgrowth of the concern over the postwar shortage of elementary-school teachers, its importance and implications are believed to extend well beyond the conditions of supply and demand in 1946–1951. These conditions have given rise to a voluminous literature, with the reports of Fine and the tabulations of Maul indicating the scope of the problem. Beecher and his associates have reported a study of the quality of the teaching performance of regular and emergency elementary teachers in New York State schools, and McIntire in his doctoral research tested the effectiveness of similar groups of teachers in the elementary schools of California by means of comparing the measured learning achievements of their pupils. To date, however, no studies have been reported in which the vocational interests and teaching satisfaction of emergency teachers have been compared with those of the regular teachers. The recognized need for that type of study prompted this investigation.

During the late spring and summer of 1951, usable Strong Vocational Interest Blanks and Teaching Satisfaction Scales were received by mail from 239 regular and 249 emergency teachers. The latter group consisted of 137 secondary-trained elementary teachers and 112 liberal-arts graduates. Of the total of 952 teachers in the original mailing, 75 per cent responded. From the total group of 952 teachers who received invitations to participate, 488 or 51 per cent submitted completed blanks. This return compares favorably with the results of similar studies. Analyzed and tested on several counts, the samples of regular and emergency teachers were found to be reasonably representative and homogeneous.

The principal findings of the study may be summarized as follows:

1. Total picture.

a) In measured vocational interests, the regularly trained teachers-college graduates (while very significantly below the Strong-Bedell criterion group) come out ahead of the emergency-trained college graduates teaching in elementary schools. When the difference in their mean scores in vocational interest was treated by means of the standard error of the difference formula, it was found that the regular would probably exceed the emergency teachers in 95 cases in 100 in later samplings with similar studies. Both the regularly trained elementary teachers and those who originally prepared for secondary teaching possess a statistically significant degree of difference in vocational interest over the liberal-arts graduates within the emergency group (99 and 97 cases in 100, respectively). The regulars and the retrained secondary majors are not far apart in measured vocational interest, with the difference in favor of the regulars possibly being due to sampling error.

b) The differences in mean scores among the groups tested for teaching satisfaction were not found to be statistically significant. The regulars, for instance, might be expected to get higher means in teaching sat-

isfaction than the emergencies in 86 chances in 100 in further studies.

2. Teaching experience.

a) When the vocational interest scores of the regular and the emergency elementary teachers were compared in terms of years of teaching experience, no differences between the five sets of groups were found to exist that could be considered of tested significance. Upon closer analysis, a trend was observed that suggests a decrease in the differences in vocational-interest scores between the two groups over the first four-year experience levels, with an actual shift in the fifth-year group to where the emergencies possessed the higher means.

b) The differences in teaching-satisfaction scores favor the regularly trained elementary teachers in the early but not in the later years. For the first three years, the difference favors the regulars (although not significantly: 94/100, 90/100, 79/100). By the fourth and fifth years, however, the difference is again found to shift in favor of the emergencies, but not so far as to make their advantage of statistical significance (86/100, 78/100).

3. Conditions of work.

a) The higher degrees of vocational interest in elemenatry-school teaching were found in association with teaching the younger children (K-3), the larger classes (over 30), and in the school districts in the small towns (under 25,000) with both the regular and the emergency teachers. Differences of tested statistical significance were not found to exist when the comparisons between the two groups were drawn on the same grade-level and class-size basis.

b) The greater teaching satisfaction was found in association with service with the younger children (K-3) and the smaller classes (under 30). When regulars and emergencies are compared on the basis of equivalent grade-level and class-size groups, no statistically significant differences in satisfaction are to be observed. Teaching satisfaction in the different groups is not differentially related to the size of the school district.

4. Relation between vocational interest and teaching satisfaction measures. When the highest and the lowest third of the vocational interest T-scores of each of the teacher groups studied were correlated with the paired teaching satisfaction T-scores by means of the Pearson r, a positive and reliable relationship between the two measures was found to exist with a .26 coefficient of correlation significant on the .01 level of confidence. This result compares favorably with the findings of both Schwebel and Kates in their correlations between vocational interest and job satisfaction measures of pharmacists and federal clerical workers, respectively.

5. Conclusions. While the need for further study is apparent, and while undoubtedly theoretical and practical findings of greater usefulness depend upon refinements of the methods employed in this study, it is nevertheless possible to conclude that:

a) The investigation has not borne out the apprehensions of Fine and others that the emergency teachers are a "drifting" and "demoralized" group, representing something of a threat to public elementary education. Rather, in measured vocational interest and teaching satisfaction, the emer-

gencies compare favorably with the regulars, and especially is this the case with accumulated teaching experience up to four or five years.

b) It is the tested conclusion of this investigation that a new supply of vocationally interested and job-satisfied elementary teachers has been found in the college-graduate group. While this and other studies tend to suggest that as a selected and partially tested "product" the regularly trained elementary-school teachers stand out as the better risk, the data assembled and the comparisons drawn do not suggest that the emergency-trained college-graduate elementary teacher is a poor risk.

c) Where differences in vocational interest and teaching satisfaction were found to exist between the regular and the emergency teachers, they could be said to decline with teaching experience. The sharper differences were also found in association with well-defined conditions of work. The greater contrasts were found, to be sure, between the regularly trained and the liberal-arts, emergency-trained elementary-school teachers. The differences between them were more marked in the beginning years of teaching. However, as the provisionally trained teachers without undergraduate courses in education come to identify themselves as teachers, and where they are accepted and integrated in the elementary-teacher group, especially on the lower levels (K-3) and in the smaller classes (under 30), their scores tend to approximate those of the regularly trained, standard elementary-school teacher.